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ABSTRACT

This report presents recommendations resulting from a study of current and future workforce preparation needs in Illinois. A special committee held 8 meetings and 10 hearings across the state and examined background reports on national and state labor conditions, existing job training services, and public, private, and proprietary education systems (K-12 and higher education). The Committee's investigations and recommendations address seven areas: (1) basic preparation for work, (2) workplace competencies, (3) retraining to improve competitiveness, (4) opportunities in education and employment, (5) educational transitions, (6) linking education and work, and (7) accountability. Fourteen implementation strategies are linked with estimates of needed resources for the remainder of fiscal 1992 and fiscal year 1993. An appendix lists all 38 of the recommendations. (DB)

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ED 365 267

Item #4
November 26, 1991

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE TO STUDY PREPARATION OF THE WORKFORCE

In October 1990, the Illinois Board of Higher Education established the Committee to Study Preparation of the Workforce. The Committee was charged to examine existing higher education policies, procedures, and programs to assure that resources are effectively focused to improve the preparation of the Illinois workforce and to examine strategies for narrowing gaps between worker skills and current and future requirements of businesses. Specifically, the Committee was asked to examine:

- the current and future workforce preparation needs of business;
- higher education's role in relation to the roles of secondary education, business, labor, and government in providing workforce preparation programs; and
- the effectiveness and responsiveness of colleges in meeting current and future workforce preparation needs.

Board member Dr. Robert English was appointed to serve as Chairman of the Committee. The membership of the Committee included representatives of higher education, business, and labor. The broad representation of both education and employment constituencies on the Committee was designed to ensure a full discussion of current policies, programs, and procedures and to present recommendations to improve higher education's contribution to workforce preparation.

On October 1, 1991, the *Report of the Committee to Study Preparation of the Workforce* was presented as an information item to the Illinois Board of Higher Education. This November item provides a synopsis of the Committee's work, proposes strategies for implementing the Committee's recommendations, and recommends that the Illinois Board of Higher Education adopt the Committee's recommendations. The Committee's recommendations are reproduced in an appendix to this report.

The Study Process

The Committee to Study Preparation of the Workforce held eight meetings from December 1990 through August 1991. Background reports were presented to the Committee concerning the findings of national and state studies related to workforce preparation; Illinois economic, demographic, and occupational demand trends which affect workforce preparation needs; the role of state and federal job training programs in workforce preparation; secondary education's adult, vocational, and technical education programs; and the responsibilities of higher education, particularly community colleges, in workforce preparation.

The Committee found broad consensus among national studies that, at all levels, education needs to expand its ability to keep pace with changes that are transforming the workplace; that the basic and technical skills of workers need to be improved to keep the nation economically competitive; and that education needs to more effectively demonstrate accountability to the public. State studies reveal similar findings and emphasize the need for educational performance standards to assure basic skills competency among Illinois' workforce. All studies emphasize the need for partnerships between education and business to fully understand and address these problems.

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The Committee's examination showed that, over the last decade in Illinois, the types of jobs that are needed for economic stability and growth and the skills required to perform these jobs are changing. During the 1980's, manufacturing industries declined while the state found new economic strength in service, retail and wholesale trade, and finance industries. Not only are the jobs changing, but the workers are changing. The state's population is growing more slowly than the nation's, and the total number of young people is expected to decline through the year 2010. However, the proportion of minority young people attaining working age will rise sharply, and the proportion of older workers, women, and immigrants in the labor force will increase. Studies suggest that these conditions may result in a shortage of trained entry-level workers, a shortage of workers trained in postsecondary technology programs, and a mismatch between available jobs and available workers.

The Committee's review of existing job training services revealed that almost 60 employment and training programs are being administered by 16 state agencies in Illinois. In 1990, it was estimated that combined federal and state funds totaling over $778 million support these programs to help dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, high school drop-outs, unemployed veterans, and others to find and sustain employment. Many of these programs subcontract with secondary schools, community colleges, proprietary schools, and community-based organizations to deliver training and services.

The public, private, and proprietary education systems in Illinois provide programs ranging from elementary education to graduate and professional degrees. In fiscal year 1990, vocational coursework was delivered by secondary schools to 343,000 secondary and adult students. In fall 1990, colleges, universities, and proprietary institutions enrolled 732,830 students in a wide range of fields including occupational and professional programs. Of that total, community colleges enrolled over 141,000 students in occupational degree programs.

From its background study, the Committee identified seven issues that present challenges to education and business in improving preparation of the workforce: Basic Preparation for Work, Workplace Competencies, Retraining to Improve Competitiveness, Opportunities in Education and Employment, Educational Transitions, Linking Education and Work, and Accountability.

To verify the Committee's definition of Illinois' workforce preparation challenges and to investigate possible solutions, ten hearings were held across the state with employers, trade and industrial associations, and education and training providers. The testimony provided at these hearings confirmed the Committee's belief that basic skills preparation is a primary concern when hiring employees at every level of responsibility; that many new entrants to the workforce lack certain personal as well as technical skills required in the workplace; and that partnerships between all sectors of education and training with the business community are needed to address these challenges.

The Committee to Study Preparation of the Workforce incorporated the information gathered at hearings into its definition of workforce preparation issues and its determination of actions needed within higher education to address each of the seven workforce preparation challenges.

Basic Preparation for Work

The Committee to Study Preparation of the Workforce finds that too many of Illinois' youth and adults are not adequately prepared for further education or employment. Basic skills development must be a priority at all levels of education and these skills must be taught in a way that maximizes their relevance to further education and employment. To achieve this goal, programs to deliver basic preparation must be adequately funded and must use the best instructional resources available.

Workplace Competencies

Productivity is limited by deficiencies in both technical and interpersonal skills. The absence of highly developed technical skills as well as the ability to effectively interact with others, to accept responsibility, and to meet employment commitments is too frequently evident in the workplace. The Committee asserts that schools, colleges, universities, and business must respond in cost-effective ways, such as through program coordination, resource sharing, and development of programs in new technologies. The development of work-related interpersonal skills must be incorporated into instructional processes at all levels of education.

Retraining to Improve Competitiveness

Efforts by business to improve competitiveness will be hampered unless the skills of management and labor are upgraded to include new technologies and work strategies. Demographic trends in Illinois demand that retraining must increasingly be directed toward all members of the workforce. The Committee maintains that improvements must be made in the coordination and delivery of programs to the current workforce; that dissemination of information to business, students, and workers about retraining programs and services must be increased; and that continuing education programs should be widely available.

Opportunities in Education and Employment

The Committee believes that better access to education and employment opportunities must be achieved for Illinois' diverse and rapidly changing population. The health of Illinois' economy and its quality of life are directly tied to its level of success in addressing the educational needs of the state's diverse populations and preparing them for productive lives. Colleges, universities, and businesses must actively recruit minorities and immigrants and provide them with support in learning experiences and in the workplace that will enhance their ability to succeed and to contribute to personal and community economic growth.

Educational Transitions

Discontinuities in the design and delivery of education and training by schools, colleges and universities, and businesses have resulted in increasing needs for remediation in the classroom and for basic skills instruction in the workplace. Transitions across education levels and providers must function effectively. Education programs need to build upon existing skills and knowledge, whether those skills are acquired in educational institutions or in prior industry training and experience. In addition, students need counseling and information on career options and expectations to enhance their ability to prepare for work.

Linking Education and Work

Business and education have not adequately coordinated their efforts to ensure that what is taught in the classroom is relevant in the workplace and that students are prepared with the skills and work habits needed for lifelong learning and employment. To address this challenge, the Committee contends that colleges and universities must form effective partnerships with businesses in developing and delivering education programs. Further, higher education's greatest overall contribution to improved preparation of the workforce will be to prepare outstanding elementary and secondary teachers. To accomplish these goals, efforts must be made to directly involve students and faculty in the workplace through cooperative programs with business which increase the relevance of education to work and communicate knowledge and skill requirements to students and faculty.

Accountability

The priorities of the state's education and training system need to be defined and its results regularly monitored. Private and governmental resources for training and education must be carefully targeted and efficiently operated. Information on student progress and performance should provide a basis for implementing program improvements and refocusing priorities. In addition, the Committee believes that students, employers, and taxpayers should be assured that education and training programs will deliver the knowledge and skills stated in their objectives.

Implementation Strategies

The Committee to Study Preparation of the Workforce has responded to the challenges identified in this study by calling for new initiatives to expand higher education's contribution to workforce preparation. The Committee also recognizes that many efforts to improve preparation of the workforce are underway and recommends that these strategies be enhanced to improve their effectiveness.

The recommendations of the Committee address the range of contributions that higher education can make to workforce preparation and will be implemented as partnerships are established and resources are made available. The following implementation strategies and the corresponding estimates of needed resources reflect implementation activities proposed for the remainder of fiscal year 1992 and fiscal year 1993.

1. To improve the basic preparation for work of students at all levels of education, school/college partnerships will continue to be strengthened and initiatives will continue with the State Board of Education to achieve equitable funding for adult basic education programs offered by community colleges. The Illinois Community College Board will identify ways to improve adult basic education, adult secondary education, and English as a Second Language programs and to ensure that resources are directed to implementing these improvements.

2. Three Centers for Learning Excellence will be established to serve as model programs in the effective use of technology, computer-assisted instruction, and innovative teaching methods in adult basic skills instruction. These centers will demonstrate delivery of comprehensive instructional and support services through coordination of various sources of adult education funding and other college and community services. It is estimated that these centers can be implemented through $300,000 in Workforce Preparation grants administered by the Illinois Community College Board. The State Board of Education will be requested to provide matching grants from adult education funds.

3. To address training needs created by changing technology, a Center of Emerging Technology will be established. It will be designed by experts from business, labor, and education who will define curricular standards, faculty qualifications, and facility and equipment requirements. This center will demonstrate effective means of identifying, supporting, and teaching new technological skills through cooperation between business and colleges and universities. This center will be implemented through allocation of $500,000 in Higher Education Cooperation Act funds. It is anticipated that a second center will be funded in fiscal year 1994 at approximately the same level and from the same source of funds.

4. Work will continue with the State Board of Education to design and implement technology preparation programs administered jointly by community colleges and secondary schools. These programs will be funded through the federal Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act appropriation of $2,700,000 which supports both community college and secondary programs. Additional programs will be implemented in fiscal year 1994 utilizing the same source of funds at a comparable level.

5. To increase awareness of and access to retraining opportunities, information clearinghouses will be established at three community college campuses to coordinate and disseminate information on the variety of job training and employment services available in each of the three community college districts. These "one-stop shops" for information will be designed in cooperation with Job Training Partnership Act Service Delivery Areas and other local employment training providers. The coordination strategies, funding plans, and services employed by the centers will serve as models for additional centers to be established in other community college districts. The three pilot Centers will be supported by $300,000 in Job Training Partnership Act funds administered by the Illinois Community College Board.

6. The Illinois Community College Board will award Workforce Preparation Awards to recognize outstanding community college programs that respond to businesses' needs for a skilled, educated workforce.

7. To improve opportunities in education and employment, Board of Higher Education staff will revise the *Guidelines for Updating Annual Reports on Underrepresented Groups in Higher Education* to include reporting goals and strategies to improve preparation for work of underrepresented groups. The revised *Guidelines* will be disseminated to universities and community colleges in March 1992 for reports to be submitted to Board staff in October 1992. The statewide *Report on Underrepresented Groups*, including goals and strategies to improve workforce preparation, will be prepared for submission to the Governor and the General Assembly in January 1993.

8. In the award of fiscal year 1994 Higher Education Cooperation Act grants, additional emphasis will be placed on increasing the number of students from underrepresented groups in elementary and secondary education teacher training programs.

9. In an effort to improve the educational transition between industry training programs and postsecondary education, Board of Higher Education staff and Illinois Community College Board staff will work with the American Council on Education's Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction (PONSI) to expand the use of PONSI in Illinois. Illinois businesses will be informed of the availability of PONSI and encouraged to evaluate their training programs for collegiate credit assignments.

10. Linkages between education and work will be expanded by the implementation of the Illinois Cooperative Work Study Program (P.A. 87-0513). Rules and application procedures for the program were adopted by the Board of Higher Education in October 1991. Application materials for grants were mailed to public and nonpublic institutions in October 1991 and are to be returned to the Board office in January 1992. Applications will be reviewed and recommendations for awarding the $1 million appropriated for the program (P.A. 87-0049) will be submitted for Board of Higher Education consideration in March 1992.

11. Systems for monitoring student progress will be expanded by implementing the Alumni Follow-Up System. Procedures and survey items for the statewide collection of alumni follow-up data have been designed and disseminated to public universities for administration in 1992. Public universities will collect consistent information on the employment, further education, and satisfaction of graduates to be used at the campus and the state levels to document educational outcomes. Results of this survey will be evaluated and incorporated in the academic program reviews included in the fiscal year 1994 Resource Allocation and Management Program submissions.

12. A proposal to pilot test an Employer Feedback System to gather information about former students' progress and contributions in the workplace has been developed and will be reviewed with Illinois employers. This system will be linked with the Illinois Department of

Employment Security's Employment Tracking System and will be pilot tested in fiscal year 1993. Once fully developed, the system will provide institutions with information about the employment skills, performance, and success of their graduates in company training programs and will be incorporated as an integral part of the program review process.

13. Board of Higher Education staff, in cooperation with community college and university representatives, will develop guidelines for defining competencies and establishing terms and procedures for guaranteeing graduate skills. Universities and community colleges will inform Illinois businesses of basic skill and workplace competency guarantees.

14. The Illinois Community College Board staff and the staff of the Illinois Board of Higher Education will intensify collaborative efforts with the Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, the State Board of Education, and other state agencies to advance the strategies for implementation of the recommendations of the Committee to Study Preparation of the Workforce.

Recommendations

The recommendations of the Committee to Study Preparation of the Workforce were presented to the Board of Higher Education on October 1, 1991 and are reproduced in the appendix to this report. The staff believes that these recommendations reflect policy directions that will improve workforce preparation in the future, and provide the basis for expanded contributions by Illinois colleges and universities in achieving this goal.

The staff recommends adoption of the following resolution:

The Board of Higher Education hereby adopts the recommendations of the Committee to Study Preparation of the Workforce found in the appendix to this report.

APPENDIX

The Committee to Study Preparation of the Workforce recognizes that achieving the goal of preparing all students at all levels of education for productive lives and careers will require cooperative efforts between higher education and elementary and secondary education, as well as other providers of education and training, and business itself.

Likewise, the Committee recognizes that many efforts to improve preparation of the workforce are currently underway, and have been for many years. These efforts are clearly not limited to colleges and universities, but involve elementary and secondary schools, unions, trade and professional associations, and training programs offered by business and the military. The many public and private sector providers of education and training emphasize the need for colleges and universities to actively pursue partnerships to improve the preparation of the workforce.

The recommendations of the Committee to Study Preparation of the Workforce focus on issues where higher education has direct responsibility and, in some cases, already is undertaking major initiatives. The recommendations address each of the seven areas which present challenges in improving preparation of the workforce: Basic Preparation for Work, Workplace Competencies, Retraining to Improve Competitiveness, Opportunities in Education and Employment, Educational Transitions, Linking Education and Work, and Accountability.

Basic Preparation for Work

Challenge: Too many of Illinois' youth and adults are not adequately prepared for further education or employment.

In Illinois, 34,000 students drop out of high school annually. Forty million new workers will join the American workforce between 1988 and the year 2000, and employers report that many new workers lack basic academic skills. Low levels of basic skills such as reading, writing, computation, communications, problem-solving ability, and learning skills among new entrants to the workforce, the current labor force, and among the under- and unemployed are an impediment to productivity.

The development of basic skills must be a high priority because basic skills are the foundation of all further educational and retraining endeavors. Statewide surveys and roundtable discussions with business representatives conducted by the Illinois Council on Vocational Education confirm that high priority must be assigned to basic skills development. At the same time, basic academic skills must be taught in a way that is functional to the needs of the learner, whether that be entry into the workplace or as a foundation for training, retraining, or further education.

Too often remedial, Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs are viewed as peripheral to the primary missions of colleges and universities. This tendency must be changed. Colleges and universities must strive for excellence in remedial, ABE, ASE and ESL programs; these programs must be adequately funded and must utilize the best instructional resources available.

In order to ensure a high level of basic skills competency in the workforce, the Committee to Study Preparation of the Workforce recommends that:

1. **The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), the State Board of Education (SBE), colleges and universities, and elementary and secondary schools ensure that the development of basic skills is the first priority in preparing students for work as well as for further education.**

2. **Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), and English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction be of highest quality and effectively serve students. This can be achieved by ensuring an institutional commitment to these programs, assigning a core of well-qualified faculty to them, providing counseling and tutoring, and making available transportation and child care services for students. IBHE and ICCB will emphasize the review of ABE, ASE, and ESL as part of the program review process and will make budgetary adjustments based on the findings of these reviews.**

3. **In teaching basic skills, postsecondary institutions stress the application of these skills in the workplace so that skills are not viewed by students as abstractions, but as tools for problem solving in employment settings.**

4. **Since community colleges provide the majority of instruction for adults, the IBHE support the reassignment of administrative responsibility for state and federal adult education programs from the SBE to the ICCB.**

5. **State and federal adult education funds administered by the SBE be allocated to providers of ABE, ASE, and ESL programs in proportion to the amount of instruction they offer in these programs.**

6. **The ICCB work with other state agencies that have responsibility for administering adult education and literacy programs to achieve better coordination of these programs at the state and local levels.**

7. **The ICCB establish several "Centers of Learning Excellence" that demonstrate and disseminate the effective use of technology, computer-assisted instruction, and innovative teaching methods in basic skills instruction. Universities should contribute their expertise and support in the establishment and operation of these centers.**

8. **The ICCB work with the SBE and universities to effectively utilize clearinghouses to evaluate, acquire, and disseminate ABE, ASE, and ESL software and instructional materials.**

9. **Community colleges and universities assist businesses in basic skill assessment and in utilizing computer software and instructional programs to upgrade the basic skills of employees.**

Workplace Competencies

Challenge: Productivity is limited by deficiencies in both technical and interpersonal skills.

Deficiencies are often found in workplace competencies such as the ability to interact effectively with others, to accept and share responsibility for work, and to meet employment commitments. At hearings across the state, employers testified to the Committee that these competencies are essential in the workplace and emphasized the need to communicate this to current and prospective workers and to education and training providers.

The absence of highly developed technical skills in workers is a direct impediment to productivity improvement, particularly as technologies become increasingly complex. Some of the fastest growing occupations in the nation and in Illinois are technical occupations which require some amount of postsecondary training. Colleges and universities must be able to offer training on the leading-edge of emerging technologies. This is frequently difficult if expensive equipment and facilities are required, or if low enrollments are experienced in the initial stages of technology

development. If colleges and universities are to respond in cost-effective ways, it will be necessary to share resources and strategically develop programs in new technologies on a regional basis.

In order to respond effectively to the competencies needed in the modern workplace, the Committee to Study Preparation of the Workforce recommends that:

10. **The development of workplace competencies--including such qualities as reliability, leadership, and teamwork--be reinforced in curricula, in career counseling, and by faculty as an integral part of the instructional process. These competencies should be reflected in student evaluations.**

11. **Regional or statewide "Centers of Emerging Technology" be established at selected community colleges and universities. These centers will be models for the curricular standards, faculty qualifications, and facility and equipment requirements necessary to educate and train in areas of new technology. The centers will be designed by a committee of individuals from business, labor, and education which will recommend to the ICCB and the IBHE where the center(s) should be located and the consortial arrangements that should be established to ensure cost-effective operations.**

12. **The IBHE continue to support the Technical Preparation (Tech-Prep) initiative and encourage community colleges to seek state funding as well as federal funding under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act to actively engage school districts to design and implement programs which coordinate what is taught in high school with what is taught in the community colleges.**

Retraining to Improve Competitiveness

Challenge: Efforts by business and industry to improve competitiveness will be hampered unless the skills of management and labor are upgraded to include new technologies and work strategies.

While the number of young people is declining, the Department of Employment Security estimates that in Illinois almost five million people, over 80 percent of the current workforce, will still be employed in the year 2000. As industries adopt new standards and production methods to improve their competitiveness in an increasingly international economy, the work environment will be based on new technologies, new ways to organize work, and new knowledge and skills. Retraining in new technologies and work strategies must increasingly be directed toward all members of the current workforce. The American Society for Training and Development states that education and training in new technologies and productivity methods will be the competitive advantage in the new economy.

The retraining needs of businesses are varied, including training in advanced management methods and concepts, technical skill upgrading, and adult literacy. Likewise, the providers of retraining programs are diverse, and include not only colleges and universities but also programs offered by trade and professional associations, state and federal retraining programs, and in-house programs designed and offered by individual businesses. Businesses need timely information about the availability of appropriate education and training programs. Further, better coordination of education and training programs is needed across providers to assure that resources are utilized effectively. Community colleges should coordinate the assessment of retraining needs within their districts and work with other providers to assure that these needs are efficiently addressed.

In their efforts to adapt to rapidly changing technologies, businesses are increasingly encountering barriers to skill upgrading due to low levels of literacy among their current employees. Concerning its study *Literacy in the Work Force*, the Conference Board states that the full extent of

work force illiteracy is not known, but that it is a "softly ticking time bomb" in corporate America. Community colleges, with their experience and expertise in delivering remedial, ABE, and ASE programs, have an important role to play in addressing worker literacy problems.

Perhaps the most important means for retraining the workforce will be to utilize telecommunication technologies to deliver in-house educational and training programs. The use of telecommunications systems to address a wide range of instructional needs is currently being examined by the Board of Higher Education's Committee to Study Underserved Areas.

In order to upgrade the skills and knowledge of the current workforce, the Committee to Study Preparation of the Workforce recommends that:

13. **Greater priority be placed on retraining the current workforce by working with employers to identify needs for retraining and responding to those needs at convenient times and locations. Colleges and universities should seek to improve retraining programs based upon the evaluations of programs by employers and employees.**

14. **The ICCB and IBHE work with the SBE and other state agencies that have a responsibility for training programs to assure that state and federal funds are used effectively, and that information about education and training programs is disseminated in a cost-effective way.**

15. **Community colleges take the initiative to assess retraining needs within their districts, to work in concert with universities and private sector providers to address retraining needs, and to share resources (including faculty, facilities, and equipment) with other providers of training services. Community colleges should work with other providers of retraining programs to establish "one-stop" clearinghouses to assist businesses in accessing training programs.**

16. **The ICCB establish an award for colleges and universities that meet high standards in addressing training and retraining needs.**

17. **The IBHE, based upon the work of its Committee to Study Underserved Areas, establish a statewide telecommunications-based instructional delivery system that can provide cost-effective continuing education and training programs by linking colleges and universities to each other and to the workplace.**

Opportunities in Education and Employment

Challenge: Better access to education and employment opportunities must be achieved for Illinois' diverse and rapidly changing population.

The population of the state, and thus its workforce, is growing slowly. The proportion of young people is declining, and the proportion of minorities composing the labor force is increasing. Immigration of workers with low educational attainment and limited English language proficiency into the state's labor pool is expanding. Sixty percent of the state's women are expected to be employed outside the home in the next decade.

Increasing demands for a skilled workforce require that Illinois' diverse population be provided opportunities for education, training, and employment. Students and workers who are older, minority, immigrant, female, disabled, economically disadvantaged, displaced, or unemployed require new educational strategies and employment policies to gain and sustain meaningful employment in the changing workplace. Many studies, including the *National Goals for Education*, call for improving the extent and quality of minority participation in education and employment.

The health of Illinois' economy and its quality of life are directly tied to its level of success in addressing the educational needs of the state's diverse populations and preparing them for productive lives and careers.

Colleges, universities, and businesses must actively recruit minorities and immigrants and provide them counseling, mentoring, and a supportive environment in learning experiences and in the workplace. Colleges and universities must reverse the decline in the number of minority teachers and form active partnerships with elementary and secondary schools that enhance the success of minority students at all levels of education.

To enhance opportunities in education and employment, the Committee to Study Preparation of the Workforce recommends that:

18. **Colleges and universities in partnership with businesses provide counseling, financial assistance, mentoring, and a supportive environment to assure the success of underrepresented groups in learning experiences and in the workplace. The IBHE's annual "Report on Underrepresented Groups" will incorporate an evaluation of goals and strategies to improve the preparation for work of underrepresented groups and will provide descriptions of exemplary programs to prepare underrepresented groups for employment.**

19. **The IBHE place high priority on awarding Higher Education Cooperation Act (HECA) Minority Achievement grants which will increase the number of students from underrepresented groups in elementary and secondary teacher training programs. It is imperative that the decline in the number of minority teachers be reversed.**

Educational Transitions

Challenge: There are discontinuities in the design and delivery of education and training by schools, colleges and universities, and businesses.

The increasing need for remediation in the classroom and for basic skills instruction in the workplace suggests that transitions across education levels and providers are not effective. Educational achievement at the earliest levels is critically important. Improvements are needed in the transition from secondary school to postsecondary education to ensure that students complete programs and succeed in gaining the skills needed in the workplace. Programs need to build upon existing skills and knowledge, whether these skills are acquired in educational institutions or in the workplace. The goals of the Governor's Task Force on Human Resource Development further confirm the need for articulation among all public and private education and training providers.

Education in community colleges and universities should build more effectively upon prior industry training and experience. The Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction is an effort of the American Council on Education whereby professors from accredited institutions of higher education evaluate industry training courses and assign an appropriate discipline, course level, and credit hour value to the course. Higher education institutions may then grant credit toward a degree for completion of the industry training.

Methods need to be developed to assess work experience and evaluate business-sponsored training for credit toward educational programs. Students need career counseling and up-to-date information on career options and expectations to enhance their ability to prepare for work.

In order to facilitate successful transitions from education to work and from work to further education, the Committee to Study Preparation of the Workforce recommends that:

20. **In view of the importance of early educational achievement and the tendency for educational deficiencies to accumulate, colleges and universities continue to support elementary and secondary schools through joint efforts to strengthen the preparation of students for further education and employment.**

21. **Higher education broaden educational options for students. Qualified high school students should have opportunities to enroll concurrently in specialized or advanced courses offered by community colleges and senior institutions and to receive appropriate advanced placement credit at the postsecondary level. The ICCB and SBE should work together to remove constraints related to teacher certification and financing policies and to build opportunities for concurrent enrollment into Tech-Prep programs.**

22. **Colleges and universities award college credit for work-based learning that is equivalent to college courses by utilizing guidelines for portfolio assessment and examinations such as the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) and the Guide to Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Forces.**

23. **Colleges and universities better integrate into their programs what is learned on the job. The IBHE should promote the evaluation of business training programs for postsecondary credit based upon the American Council on Education's Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction (PONSI), and work with the private sector to develop consistent standards for awarding credit for work-based learning.**

24. **Community colleges support career advancement opportunities by developing advanced certificate programs in appropriate occupational fields and working with universities to develop baccalaureate capstone programs.**

25. **The IBHE and ICCB continue to promote the improvement of educational programs based upon insights gained through systems that monitor student progress; namely, the High School Feedback System, an Alumni Follow-Up System, and an Employer Follow-Up System.**

Linking Education and Work

Challenge: Business and education have not adequately coordinated their efforts to ensure that what is taught in the classroom is relevant in the workplace and that students are prepared with the skills and work habits needed for lifelong learning and employment.

Education, business, labor, and government all have a role in the development of a well-prepared workforce. A lack of communication and coordination among diverse providers of education and training can result in the unnecessary duplication of services and inefficient use of limited resources in business and education. Colleges and universities must form effective partnerships with businesses in developing and delivering educational programs.

Faculty and teachers must be well prepared to teach basic academic skills and job skills that are needed in the workplace. Higher education's greatest overall contribution to improved preparation of the workforce will be to graduate outstanding elementary and secondary teachers.

Rapidly changing technologies and new job requirements must be understood by colleges and universities and integrated into classroom instruction. The Committee concurs with the findings of the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, and Commerce in *Building a Quality Workforce* that education and business must be mobilized to capitalize on their comparative strengths and advantages. Efforts to directly involve students and faculty in the workplace through cooperative

programs with business are needed to increase the relevance of education to work and to communicate knowledge and skill requirements to students and faculty.

In order to establish effective linkages between education and work, the Committee to Study Preparation of the Workforce recommends that:

26. **Colleges and universities assure that graduates of teacher education programs are able to provide high quality instruction in the essential learning areas identified in "State Goals for Learning" and "Learning Outcomes for College-Bound Students." Higher education's most important contribution to educational achievement and workforce preparation is to ensure that elementary and secondary schools are able to hire well-qualified teachers.**

27. **Occupational programs offered by community colleges include a work-based learning experience in the curriculum.**

28. **The IBHE utilize the Illinois Cooperative Work Study Program authorized by P.A. 87-513 to expand work-based learning experiences for students.**

29. **The IBHE and ICCB support the SBE's Vocational Instructional Practicum (VIP) Program to provide business-based internships and training programs to vocational faculty at both the secondary and postsecondary levels. Further, the IBHE and ICCB should support the expansion of the VIP Program to include internships and training for academic faculty at the secondary and postsecondary levels.**

30. **Colleges and universities prepare counselors to fully understand employment options and provide opportunities for counselors to keep up-to-date with job requirements by expanding contacts, including on-site observations, with private sector employers. Counselors must be well prepared to inform students about coursework that is relevant to different career options.**

31. **A program be established to encourage businesses to develop partnerships with college and university departments to achieve workforce preparation goals by providing access to state-of-the-art equipment, by making personnel available to serve as adjunct faculty, and by providing internship opportunities and career counseling to students.**

Accountability

Challenge: The priorities of the state's education and training system need to be defined and its results regularly monitored.

Training and educational needs are increasing while private and governmental resources to address these needs are limited. As a consequence, educational and training activities must be carefully targeted and efficiently operated. It is a joint responsibility of schools, colleges and universities, job training providers, employers, and governmental agencies to establish priorities, develop programs that are responsive to these priorities, evaluate their results, and expedite program improvements when necessary.

Colleges and universities need to expand systems for assessing student progress and performance. The results should become an integral part of program reviews conducted by colleges and universities and thereby a basis for implementing program improvements and refocusing priorities. These systems should also provide the basis for informing employers and the public of results.

Students and employers should be assured that educational and training programs will deliver the knowledge and skills stated in their objectives. Colleges and universities should carefully define and guarantee knowledge and skill objectives which are measurable and verifiable. Program-specific definitions and guarantees should be developed by each college and university.

To ensure accountability for the results of educational and training programs offered by colleges and universities, the Committee to Study Preparation of the Workforce recommends that:

32. **The High School Feedback System for communicating information about student progress and performance to secondary schools be continued and refined based on consultation with the SBE and secondary school principals, teachers, and counselors.**

33. **The Alumni Follow-up System to obtain information about the employment and satisfaction of former students be continued by community colleges, and a similar system, being designed in cooperation with senior institutions, be implemented.**

34. **An Employer Feedback System be developed that obtains information from employers about the progress and performance of former higher education students.**

35. **Information from the above systems for monitoring student progress be incorporated in regular college and university program reviews along with campus-based student assessment systems recommended by the IBHE's Committee on the Study of Undergraduate Education, and be used as a basis for making program improvements, determining how well programs are addressing labor market needs, and informing potential students and constituents about program outcomes.**

36. **Accountability systems and information developed by higher education be better coordinated with accountability systems developed by the SBE, including the Illinois Goal Assessment Program, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act Performance Standards, and the School Recognition System authorized by P.A. 87-0559. The IBHE, ICCB, and SBE should cooperate in analyzing data from these systems to achieve program improvements as well as better accountability for performance.**

37. **Colleges and universities clearly define and guarantee that graduates possess basic reading, writing, and computational skills and provide upgrading courses, tuition free, to any graduate who does not possess these basic skill competencies.**

38. **Colleges and universities clearly define specific workplace competencies that will be acquired by graduates of a degree or certificate program and provide upgrading courses, tuition free, when employers identify graduates who do not possess measurable or verifiable competencies.**